

# UNSUNG ETYMOLOGIES: LEXICAL AND ONOMASTIC EVIDENCE FOR THE INFLUENCE OF SCOTS ON ENGLISH

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## 1. Introduction

The Scots Language raises a number of taxonomic questions for the historical lexicographer. Although the precise status of Scots remains a debated issue, the perspective from which this paper is written is that Scots is a language. This stance should by now be uncontroversial. Scots is recognised as a minority language by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Strasbourg 1992), and this document is supported by both the Scottish Parliament and UK Government. In the *Edinburgh Companion to Scots* (2003), Scots is helpfully defined as “a language continuum that ranges from ‘Broad’ Scots to ‘Scottish Standard English’”.<sup>1</sup>

The histories of Scots and English are intertwined, as indeed are the histories of Scots and English lexicography. There are many sound arguments for considering Scots and English together, and it is often difficult to draw a clear distinction between the two. In this paper I would like to address some of the problems of the status of Scots and Scottish English in the light of current methodologies employed in the historical lexicography of Scots and English.

## 2. The Status of Scots in the Historical Dictionaries

Policy decisions for large-scale works such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and the *Scottish National Dictionary* (SND) have a major impact on how language varieties are analysed. The creation of such multi-volume resources requires a great deal of manpower and time, and so taxonomic decisions must be pragmatic as well as linguistically sound. However, the chosen methodologies will inevitably reflect the social and

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<sup>1</sup> Corbett, *The Edinburgh Companion to Scots*, 1.

linguistic attitudes of their time, and this has the unfortunate side-effect of binding their linguistic analysis to the views of a former age. It may not be possible to formulate a methodology that is objective enough to cope with evolving perceptions of language over time, but when new editions are contemplated, the opportunity for large-scale reform regarding such perceptions should not be overlooked.

There are several ways in which such shifts in social and linguistic perspectives are of special relevance to the coverage of the Scots language in historical dictionaries. *SND* and *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (DOST) both began publication in 1931 and were completed in 1976 and 2002 respectively. During the intervening decades, theoretical approaches to linguistics changed in many respects. From a lexicographical perspective, one of the most significant of these changes was the shift from prescriptive to descriptive linguistics, which saw a dramatic increase in interest in dialectal and non-standard varieties of language. Dictionary policy, however, did not always move with the times. For example, *SND* paid significantly more attention to rural Scots vocabulary than Urban Scots lexis, with the result that much of the richness of urban lexical material was not accorded sufficient attention or status.<sup>2</sup> The Introduction to *SND* has often been criticised for the comment that "Owing to the influx of Irish and foreign immigrants in the industrial area near Glasgow the dialect has become hopelessly corrupt".<sup>3</sup> So notorious has this example become that it has featured in a poem by Tom Leonard: "right inuff / ma language is disgraceful ... even the introduction tay thi Scottish National Dictionary tellt mi", and was recently echoed by Carl MacDougall in the preface to an anthology of Scots writing: "The first edition of the *Scottish National Dictionary* described Glasgow speech as 'hopelessly corrupt'."<sup>4</sup> As recently as 1980 it was still possible to find accounts of the language which deliberately separated "Urban Scots" from "Good Scots", and even questioned whether Urban Scots should be

<sup>2</sup> This can be illustrated by the fact that Edinburgh receives no special mention in the discussion of the dialect of East Mid Scots, and Glasgow dialect features are not examined in detail as a significant sub-group within the discussion of the dialect of South Mid Scots (*SND*: Introduction, xx-xxi).

<sup>3</sup> (*SND*: Introduction, xxvii § 93.8) While this is not a view that would receive much academic support at the present time, like many others, *SND* inevitably reflects the value-judgements of a former age. Given the depth and breadth of the Introduction, however, it is somewhat unfortunate that this comment has received so much attention.

<sup>4</sup> Leonard, *Intimate Voices*, 120; MacDougall, *Scots: The Language of the People*, Preface.

regarded as a Scots dialect.<sup>5</sup> Such attitudes are now untenable, and are relics of a former prescriptive age. Similarly, in recent years, scholarly attention has been increasingly directed towards non-standard Scots grammar, treating such features as use of the past participle form for simple past (e.g. *I seen* as opposed to *I saw*) and use of the simple past inflection in place of the past participle (e.g. *I had ran* as opposed to *I had run*) simply as aspects of variation within the language rather than judging one variant to be “correct”.<sup>6</sup>

Other changes in viewpoint have often prompted dictionary editors to alter their policies while the works are still in progress. William Craigie, the first editor of DOST, had formerly been an editor for the OED, and often followed James Murray’s distinction between *words* and *things*, choosing to exclude information that he regarded as “encyclopedic”.<sup>7</sup> However, successive editors did not agree entirely with this practice and introduced changes during their editorship. When Jack Aitken took over as editor in 1955, he altered the focus of the dictionary. He noted that “many readers consult the dictionary for precise definitions of archaic Scots words and technical terms” and he “departed from Sir William Craigie’s cautious and conservative practice ... aim[ing] ... at a more elaborate subdivision by usage, with fuller, more precise and more detailed definitions, sometimes accompanied by brief notes of an encyclopaedic nature”.<sup>8</sup> Later editors furthered this approach. As stated in the introduction to volume twelve, “from around the beginning of the letter S, while not neglecting the essentials of etymology and linguistic history, the functioning of the word in society has been given as much importance as its purely linguistic nature”.<sup>9</sup> Headword policies also evolved as later editors moved away from Craigie’s policy of separating phonological variants. Financial constraints prevented the re-editing of earlier sections of the dictionary with such innovations in mind, and as a result the twelve

<sup>5</sup> See for example Aitken, “New Scots”, 45-6.

<sup>6</sup> Such non-standard constructions are nevertheless regular for many Scots. When students taking the English Language Level One course at Glasgow University (1999/2000) were asked, as part of a grammar exercise, to give an example of the use of an auxiliary verb followed by a main verb, several of them naturally used constructions of the latter type discussed above (e.g. *I had ran*, *I had went*, etc). Although such constructions deviate from the Scottish Standard English in which the formal work of the course was typically conducted, their answers were not “wrong”, because they had used an auxiliary and a main verb as stated in the question.

<sup>7</sup> DOST Vol. 12 (Editorial Philosophy) xx-xxi.

<sup>8</sup> DOST Vol. 12 (Editorial Philosophy) xxii.

<sup>9</sup> DOST Vol. 12 (Editorial Philosophy) xxiv.

volumes of DOST provide an alphabetical record of the chronological evolution of editorial policy.

Sir James Murray, editor of the first edition of the OED, was Scottish and had a great deal of interest in the dialects of Scotland. However, he did not approve of John Jamieson's use of the term "Scottish Language", and was more interested in tracing the linguistic continuum across the south of Scotland and north of England. For Murray, political boundaries were less significant than isoglosses; he wanted "a Dictionary founded upon Jamieson's, but embracing the Northern dialect as a whole, and not merely that fragment of it used in Scotland".<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Language and Politics

It should perhaps be underlined that it remains the case that political and historical factors, not only linguistic factors, determine whether the speech and writing of any given culture is granted the title of "language". It is also significant that the word "dialect" often conveys a strong sense of negative judgement, emphasising cultural subordination and reflecting local political views.<sup>11</sup> The biased and hierarchical nature of these terms has of necessity encouraged many linguists to instead refer to "varieties" of language, be they standard or non-standard. While such linguistic tolerance creates the ideal space for constructive debate, standard languages nevertheless tend to be treated with greater respect than dialects. Rightly or wrongly, standardisation is often perceived as bringing a certain degree of stability to a language, as though fixing the grammar and spelling somehow rescues it from the amorphous obscurity of allowing variation in usage.

The relationship between Scots and English has been likened to the relationship between some of the Scandinavian languages, which are recognised as distinct languages, even though they share many features with one another, and have areas of mutual intelligibility. Bearing this in mind, it is therefore quite curious that while there are dictionaries of American English, which cover the whole language and not just the parts of it that are restricted to the United States, there is no such equivalent resource for Scotland. It is my hope that one day, funding permitting, this vacuum may be filled, and that Scottish Language Dictionaries will redress this imbalance in the codification of Scotland's languages.

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<sup>10</sup> Murray, *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, 90-91.

<sup>11</sup> But compare Oftedal "Is Nynorsk a Minority Language?", 121-2.



Because such resources have yet to be created, and because Scots has too often been viewed as a subordinate (or even sub-standard) dialect on the periphery of English, an illusory veil has been drawn over the presence and impact of Scots and Scottish lexis on the English linguistic stage. The Third Edition of the OED, now in progress, still follows James Murray's late-nineteenth century editorial policy of regarding Scots as a dialect of English. Considering the vast quantities of Scottish material contained in the OED, it would certainly be impractical to remove such material from the dictionary record. Furthermore, Scots and English are so closely related that any study of one would be quite remiss to ignore the other. Cogent arguments supporting the inclusion of Scots in the OED can certainly be made. However, the labelling of Scots as a dialect of English is becoming more difficult to sustain.

At the present time in post-devolution Scotland, the Scots language is gaining status. The Scottish Parliament recognises Scots as a language, and in recent years government funding has been secured for a number of language organisations. Scots literature is flourishing, schools are investing in programmes which encourage respect for Scots in the classroom, and Scots speakers now have much more access to their linguistic heritage.<sup>12</sup> When someone learns that their own speech, is not, as they have believed, or been led to believe, a slang or sub-standard form of English, but is in fact descended from the language of Scotland's medieval kings and queens, they often feel both surprised and empowered.<sup>13</sup> Scots is also interacting with new Scottish minority languages: both Scots and Urdu can be heard on Awaz FM, a popular radio station serving Glasgow's Asian community.<sup>14</sup>

But English dictionary editors need not fear that we have any intentions of levelling charges against them for contravening the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Fortunately, there is a very simple solution to this apparent conflict of interests. Make one small change to the introductory materials: recognise the status of Scots as a language; make it clear that the "Sc." in the list of abbreviations stands for a language, and all will be well.

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<sup>12</sup> Recent publications by Itchy-Coo, for example, have enjoyed a great deal of success.

<sup>13</sup> Scottish Language Dictionaries operates an extensive outreach programme.

<sup>14</sup> <<http://www.radioawaz.com>>

#### 4. The influence of Scots on English

Many words which are now recognised as belonging to the vocabulary of Standard English were first recorded in Scottish texts, in a Scots or Scottish English context. The word *cosy* was first recorded in a text from 1709 where it has the sense “warm and sheltered”.<sup>15</sup> Slightly later, the word is used by Robert Burns in a poem of 1785, and in the nineteenth century it can be found in the works of many English writers including Charles Dickens and Queen Victoria.<sup>16</sup> Considering the popularity of Burns’ poetry, it seems likely that his works were largely responsible for bringing the word to the wider public and furthering its acceptance into Standard English.<sup>17</sup> A similar pattern of borrowing can be seen for a number of words first recorded in Scottish sources and later popularised by major Scottish writers. The word *guffaw* “a burst of coarse laughter; a loud or boisterous laugh” is first recorded in a poem of 1720 by the Scottish poet Allan Ramsay.<sup>18</sup> It is later taken up by other influential writers including Sir Walter Scott, and the corresponding verb is found in the writings of Thomas Carlyle.<sup>19</sup> Ramsay is also responsible for the first recorded use of *gumption* “common sense, shrewdness”, in a poem of 1719, and of *rampage* “to behave violently or furiously”, also later used by Sir Walter Scott.<sup>20</sup> Literary influence is not the only means by which words of Scottish origin entered the English language. *Opencast*, as a form of coal-mining, is recorded earliest in Scottish sources from the late seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> Other words, particularly those borrowed from Gaelic, may reflect aspects of cultural life which later became known or influential furth of Scotland. The treatment of such terms is of special interest to this discussion, because English dictionaries traditionally treat such words as borrowings from Gaelic into English, ignoring the fact that entered English via Scots. *Slogan*, originally meaning “a war-cry or battle cry” is one such example, recorded in sixteenth century Scots texts and subsequently taken up by popular writers in later centuries.<sup>22</sup>

This and other useful information about Scottish words is now becoming more accessible thanks to the production of electronic versions

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<sup>15</sup> OED2 s.v. *cosy* *a.* 1.

<sup>16</sup> OED2 s.v. *cosy* *a.* 1.

<sup>17</sup> SND s.v. *cosie* *adj.* I.

<sup>18</sup> OED2 s.v. *guffaw* *n.*

<sup>19</sup> OED2 s.v. *guffaw* *n.*, *guffaw* *v.*

<sup>20</sup> OED2 s.v. *gumption* *n.*, *rampage* *v.*

<sup>21</sup> OED3 s.v. *opencast* *n.*

<sup>22</sup> Gael. *shuagh-ghairm*, f. *shuagh* host + *gairm* cry, shout; OED2 s.v. *slogan* *n.*

of DOST, SND and OED, and lexical research is becoming increasingly refined. A further significant point is that while the Second Edition of the OED labelled 122 words or senses as "orig. Sc.", the Third Edition has already identified 108 such words and senses during the revision of the letters from M to P, with the total number standing at 228.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, there may still be room for a little improvement, with regard to taxonomy. One problem is that there are many cases where a word first recorded in Scottish sources will not be marked by the OED as "orig. Sc.", for various reasons.<sup>24</sup> For example, the word *oligarchic* is first recorded in the work of Scottish poet William Drummond in 1643.<sup>25</sup> While it would be fair to say that this word does not exhibit specifically Scottish characteristics in its phonology or morphology, distinctive Scots phonology is not the only criteria by which to judge whether a word is Scots. Many Scots words including *outwith* "outside, beyond", French borrowings such as *ashet* "large (oval) plate" and Latin borrowings such as *expone* "to expose, expound" do not have any such features. Perhaps it would therefore be more accurate to view Drummond's use of the word *oligarchic* as geographically neutral and culturally "unmarked". Unfortunately, however, any such "unmarked" usages will currently be labelled by OED as "English", thus subsuming the neutrality of the word under a culturally marked, potentially misleading term. There is currently no available method by which such unmarked usage can be labelled, and this does a great disservice not only to the Scots language, but also to other varieties of English, particularly those of Ireland and Wales, which have close connections to the British Isles, but nevertheless operate within different cultural parameters.<sup>26</sup> It is also relevant that there is currently no label in the OED that identifies English words that are only used within England.

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<sup>23</sup> In preparation for this article, I searched OED3 following its last update on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2006, at which time 108 words and senses were identified as 'orig. Sc.' in the revised text from *M-Pimento*; the total number of words and senses thus labelled was 228.

<sup>24</sup> OED uses *Sc.* to represent both 'Scots' and 'Scottish' without any clear differentiation, and so the abbreviation *Orig. Sc.* can be interpreted as either 'originally Scots' or 'originally Scottish' (avoiding the now potentially offensive 'originally Scotch', used more freely by late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century commentators).

<sup>25</sup> OED3 s.v. *oligarchic a.*

<sup>26</sup> Conversely, it is common practice for variant forms to be labelled as 'Sc.' by the OED if they have been used by a Scottish writer and are not also found in English sources.

Another example is the word *Virgilian*, “of or pertaining to, characteristic of, the poet Virgil”, recorded from the sixteenth century where it first appears in Gavin Douglas’s conclusion to his translation of the *Aeneid*.<sup>27</sup> In this example, the word appears in a Middle Scots context exhibiting a variety of Scots features: “Completit was this wark Virgiliane, Apon the fest of Marie Magdelane”. *Completit* shows use of the Scots weak past tense *-it* ending, while the word *wark* is a distinctively Scots term, related to English *work*. Nevertheless, there is nothing to indicate from the OED entry that this word was coined in Scots and appears in Scots contexts earlier than in English. A reader who did not pay close attention to the quotation evidence could therefore conclude that *Virgilian* is an English word that has existed since the early sixteenth century, and one more conceptual piece would be missing from the jigsaw of Scottish culture.

In the case of the entry for *pony* “a horse of any small breed”, attested earlier in Scottish sources, the second edition of the OED employs a rather unusual tactic, giving the etymology as “Sc. *powney*”.<sup>28</sup> This would appear to contradict OED’s policy for Scots, by suggesting that words can be borrowed from Scots into English, rather than treating the early Scottish examples as English dialect forms. Although it may be the uncertain origin of the word that has resulted in its receiving such treatment in the dictionary, the chosen methodology is nevertheless more faithful to the evidence. It would be unfortunate if such interesting linguistic information about the languages of the British Isles were regularly obscured. The cumulative result would surely be similar to the effect of referring to the whole of the Britain as England, with the wrong message being reinforced to the detriment of cultural awareness and representation.<sup>29</sup>

A related issue concerns the editorial policies employed by SND. This dictionary focuses on Scots words that are not shared with English, with the result that the current major dictionaries of Scots do not present a complete picture of the language continuum from Broad Scots to Scottish Standard English. It would therefore be extremely beneficial to the understanding of Scots and Scottish English if both were included in a single dictionary that included words shared with England, thus realising

<sup>27</sup> OED2 s.v. *Virgilian* *a*.

<sup>28</sup> OED2 s.v. *pony* *n*.

<sup>29</sup> In other English-speaking countries, particularly the United States of America, *England* is often used in error to refer to ‘Britain’ or ‘the United Kingdom’. Considering the location of ICHLL 3, in Leiden, it seems apt to draw a parallel with the erroneous use of ‘Holland’ for ‘The Netherlands’ often perpetuated by English speakers.



the ambition of former SND editor David Murison to create what he envisioned as a "Dictionary for Scotland".<sup>30</sup>

## 5. Scottish place-names and linguistic research

Recent place-name research has revealed situations in which Scottish evidence can shed light on the use of name elements and their lexical equivalents south of the border.<sup>31</sup> However, the use of modern language names in this context can be misleading. The significance of modern political boundaries should not be overstated when considering onomastic evidence from the period of pre-literary Scots (1100-1375) and from the time before 1100, when the Anglian dialect of Old English was still spoken in Scotland.<sup>32</sup> In some cases, Scottish evidence significantly predates the lexical evidence for a given item of vocabulary, and in such cases the onomastic material is of particular importance to the comprehensive assessment of the history of that word. For example, *heather* is first recorded in English in a Durham text of 1335, but the equivalent place-name element can be traced back to the eleventh century in the early spellings of the Scottish place-name Hedderwick in East Lothian.<sup>33</sup> This is the earliest known evidence for *heather* in any of the available source materials for the British Isles.<sup>34</sup>

Scottish place-name research that focuses on Scots can also influence our understanding of English by providing new or alternative interpretations for English names and lexis. This is an area where Scottish evidence has seldom been taken into account, but where the common origins of Scots and English can help to shed light on a variety of linguistic problems. The case of the Scottish place-name Motherwell, in Lanarkshire, provides one illustration. The name is first recorded in the late fourteenth century and has not been adequately explained by previous commentators. The editors of *The Names of Towns and Cities in Britain* note that "we have accepted the literal meaning of the name as the correct

<sup>30</sup> I. MacLeod, personal correspondence.

<sup>31</sup> See for example: Scott, *The Germanic Toponymicon of Southern Scotland*.

<sup>32</sup> Onomastic evidence may not appear in the written record until several centuries after a name is coined. Early place-name evidence from southern Scotland may therefore have a greater cultural affinity with the kingdom of Northumbria than medieval Scotland.

<sup>33</sup> OED2 s.v. *heather* n., MED s.v. *hather* (n.); *Hatheruich* (1093-4), Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names*, 102.

<sup>34</sup> The element is also found in English place-names from the twelfth century (MED s.v. *hather* (n.)).

one" and they gloss the name as "Our Lady's Well", that is, "the well of the Virgin Mary".<sup>35</sup> Although choosing to give this interpretation, they add that "the earliest spellings are a little difficult to explain in this context". It may therefore be useful to consider an alternative interpretation.

While *mother* in place-names can sometimes refer to the Virgin Mary, it is worth re-examining the semantic range of the word in order to assess its likely significance in particular onomastic contexts. Syntactically—or semantically—related names can also help to clarify the contexts in which given senses of an element are most likely to be found. In the case of Motherwell, the modern name Mother Water, in Wigtownshire may provide a similar construction.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, comparison might also usefully be made with the lost Cheshire name *Modrelake*, recorded in 1399. The second elements of these names, *water*, *well* and *lake* suggest that the first element may regularly combine with generics denoting bodies of water. The editors of the English Place-Name Survey volume for Cheshire follow Löfvenberg's suggestion that the first element of *Modrelake* is an unattested Old English word *\*modor* meaning "mud" or "bog", which is assumed to have existed on the basis of cognate terms found in Middle Low German and Middle Dutch.<sup>37</sup>

However, there may be a simpler explanation. The Scots word *moder*, the primary sense of which is "mother", is frequently recorded in Middle Scots from the fifteenth century in combinations denoting the "source or fountainhead (of a river, stream or the like)". The earliest citation provided in DOST is a lost Scots place-name *Modirlech* recorded in a Latin charter from 1325.<sup>38</sup> Other quotations in the dictionary show similar constructions. One refers to *the modernmyre*, recorded in the fifteenth century in an ecclesiastical register from Aberdeen, and another to *the auld moder burne* in a late sixteenth century source from Inverness. There appears to be no known evidence for this usage of *mother* in English literary sources.

The quotation evidence provided by DOST gives many examples of Middle Scots constructions in which *moder* is prefixed to a word denoting water or watery places, as *lech* "small stream", *myre* and *burne*.<sup>39</sup> It therefore seems likely that similar collocations with the elements *well* and *water* are found in the place-names Motherwell in Lanarkshire, Mother

<sup>35</sup> Nicolaisen, Gelling & Richards, *The Names of Towns and Cities in Britain*, 132.

<sup>36</sup> Mother Water (NX 4538).

<sup>37</sup> Dodgson, *The Place-Names of Cheshire*, 284.

<sup>38</sup> *Modirlech*, unidentified, prob. Aberdeen or Banff (1325; DOST s.v. *moder* n.<sup>1</sup>)

<sup>39</sup> DOST s.v. *moder* n.<sup>1</sup>

Water in Wigtownshire and the lost Cheshire place-name *Modrelake*. I would therefore like to propose that these names allow us to identify a previously unknown use of the English and Scottish place-name element *modre* or *mother*. In this instance, the Scottish onomastic and lexical evidence provides a plausible new interpretation of Motherwell as “wellspring, water source”, while at the same time indicating a more satisfactory interpretation for a lost Cheshire place-name. This discovery also has implications for the known semantic range of the corresponding lexical item. The connections between English and Scots should never be overlooked, but neither should the distinctive cultures lying behind these two languages be taken for granted.

## 6. Scots Lexicography in 2006

Scottish Language Dictionaries was formed in 2002, bringing together staff from the Scottish National Dictionary Association and *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*. In 2004, thanks to the work of the team at Dundee University who digitised the text, the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* <[www.dsl.ac.uk](http://www.dsl.ac.uk)> became available online, providing a searchable electronic version of the full text of the *Scottish National Dictionary* and the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*. In 2005 a new *Supplement* to the *Scottish National Dictionary* was added, and we look forward to augmenting and enhancing this online resource, funding permitting. The one-volume *Concise Scots Dictionary*, published in 1985, was essentially a distillation of the data contained in the *Scottish National Dictionary* and *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*.<sup>40</sup>

A new edition of *Concise Scots Dictionary* is now in preparation, and policies regarding this edition have been carefully considered in the light of current attitudes to Scots and its recognition as a language. For instance, in the first edition, it was common practice to define words which shared some of their history with parallel English forms as being simply “equal” to the English word. It was also common for these Scots words to be entered in the dictionary without an etymology, on the grounds that the relevant etymological information could be found in dictionaries of English. Although expedient for the purposes of a printed dictionary, allowing much space to be saved, these policies did no great service to the Scots language, and had the effect of constantly reinforcing the idea that

<sup>40</sup> Publication of *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* had at this time reached the letter P, so not all volumes were available to editors of the *Concise Scots Dictionary*.

Scots should be viewed in relation to English, rather than on in its own right. In the revised edition we are therefore endeavouring to redress this imbalance by implementing policies which give Scots its due status as a language independent of English. All entries will have their own etymologies, the relationship of Scots words to their English cognates does not receive any special emphasis, and the resulting dictionary will therefore provide a truer and more objective account of the lexis of the Scots language.

Scottish Language Dictionaries recognises that the lexicographer of any living language has a responsibility of care, and our organisation therefore strives to ensure that respect for social and linguistic attitudes is reflected in our publications. It is also our hope that by granting due status to Scots as a language, we may encourage others to do the same.